



The prophet Amos spoke to Israel saying *"Prepare to meet thy God O Israel."* This message had to be constantly repeated throughout the history of Israel as it was by the prophets, then by Jesus who was sent by God as God's final appeal to his nation until Jesus returns. The same message applies to us as modern-day Israel. *"Prepare to meet our God."*

The Apostle John puts the same message this way, *"Beloved now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is. Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure."* 1 John 3:2.

We are no different to Israel. We need the prophet's message. We need the voice of Jesus to counsel us unto obedience and righteousness. It is how well we respond to their voice that dictates our spiritual condition. Paul stated that *"all things that were written a foretime were written for our learning that we, through patience and comfort of the scripture, might have hope."* Now it is how well our learning of scripture is that determines our patience, our comfort, and our hope in the truth. If we do not learn from what is written, then we will not learn patience, we will not receive comfort, and we will not be strong in the hope - all essential ingredients to enter the Kingdom.

Thus again the prophet said, *"My people perish through lack of knowledge."* Understanding the will of God is the first step. Then the right application of knowledge is wisdom therefore let wisdom be at our right hand, at the doors of our heart to lead us unto life. For if we love wisdom we hate darkness or death. But contrary, as Proverbs 8:36 says if we hate wisdom we love death. Again, *"wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness."* Ecclesiastes 2:13.

We know Israel's history makes sad reading as a nation. Their backsliding, their spiritual bankruptcy and consequently their suffering.

The Apostle Paul draws from their history powerful lessons, e.g. Hebrews 4:1-2 *"Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."* Here Paul is warning us that it is our faith that determines our success spiritually. He says the Gospel was preached to Israel yet they did not receive it with faith and they fell short of the promise. John says it is our faith that enables us to overcome the world. How strong is our faith? Israel's faith was weak. Our faith can become weak because we can allow many faith-robbing obstacles weaken our hold on eternal life. Hold fast, stand firm in the faith - is our responsibility.

Israel's mistake was chiefly becoming more involved with the heathen nations around them. Is the threat any less, for us living in a world, which *"knows not God nor desires a knowledge of His ways?"*

We are told to come out from among them and be separate, keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, being found blameless. Are we different from the world? Are we a friend of the world? We must examine ourselves constantly to walk worthy of our high calling. Let us do an assessment of our spiritual standing before God in the world in which we live, eg, if we were convicted as a Christian or follower of Jesus, would there be hard evidence to prove that in fact we live as we have been called in the truth, ie, to be separate, and to be spiritually minded? Would witnesses who would be called forward to testify about us say they could see no difference in us from others in this world? Or would they say that these people are different? They talk about spiritual things, they have spiritual goals, affections and values, and they don't live for the present but prepare for the future return of Jesus.

We profess to follow the truth. Are we honouring God among men? What message are we sending to others around us? We know God is our judge but as others see us is a general assessment of our spiritual condition. Let us remember the Laodicean ecclesia had become so engrossed in the world and its ambitions, thus becoming a friend of the world, that Jesus considered them spiritually bankrupt. Let us adopt the same attitude as Nehemiah when he was invited to leave God's work to participate in other matters outside the truth. He said, *"I am doing a great work. I cannot come down. Why should I leave God's work and serve others?"* This is a perfect answer to all our resistances and things that distract us in the truth. Nehemiah only succeeded because he put God first. God therefore helped him against all odds. He completed the wall in 52 days not 53 days or more. Nehemiah had resistance within and without. The nation of Israel was the ecclesia. Each member was in what could be a divine university, where their work was assessed by God as a fail or a pass. Nehemiah had many obstacles to endure but faithfully endured in God's work. It is written in chapter 3:5 of certain members *"putting not their necks to the work."* This is equivalent to armchair Christadelphians. We all have a part to play, a job to do in the body of Jesus. Our pounds must increase. Our lamps well oiled, our lights will shine. The oil is the word, daily pondered, like the oil in the tabernacle to supply the light stand. Our prayers are the incense ascending to God as a sweet smell daily.

In our calling we are serving God in the Holy Place, preparing to meet God in the Most Holy Place. The priests of old had special garments to wear. We have the equivalent garment being clothed with the truth as Paul describes our *"loins girt about with truth."* The truth believed and obeyed covers our shame as Jesus says in the sixth vial, *"Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."* Revelation 16:15.

So at the eleventh hour, let us *"give the more earnest heed to the things that we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip."* Let us do as Paul in Titus wrote to all believers, be zealous of good works, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of Jesus Christ.

Again in Timothy, Paul speaks *"Preach the word; be instant in season out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."* *"Endure afflictions, make full proof of thy ministry."* *"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called."* *"Endure unto the end."* *"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."* *"Weeping may endure for the night but joy cometh in the morning."* Hence a crown of righteousness will be laid up for us and we shall say *"Lo this is our God, we have waited for Him. We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."* So let us now *"Prepare to meet our God."*